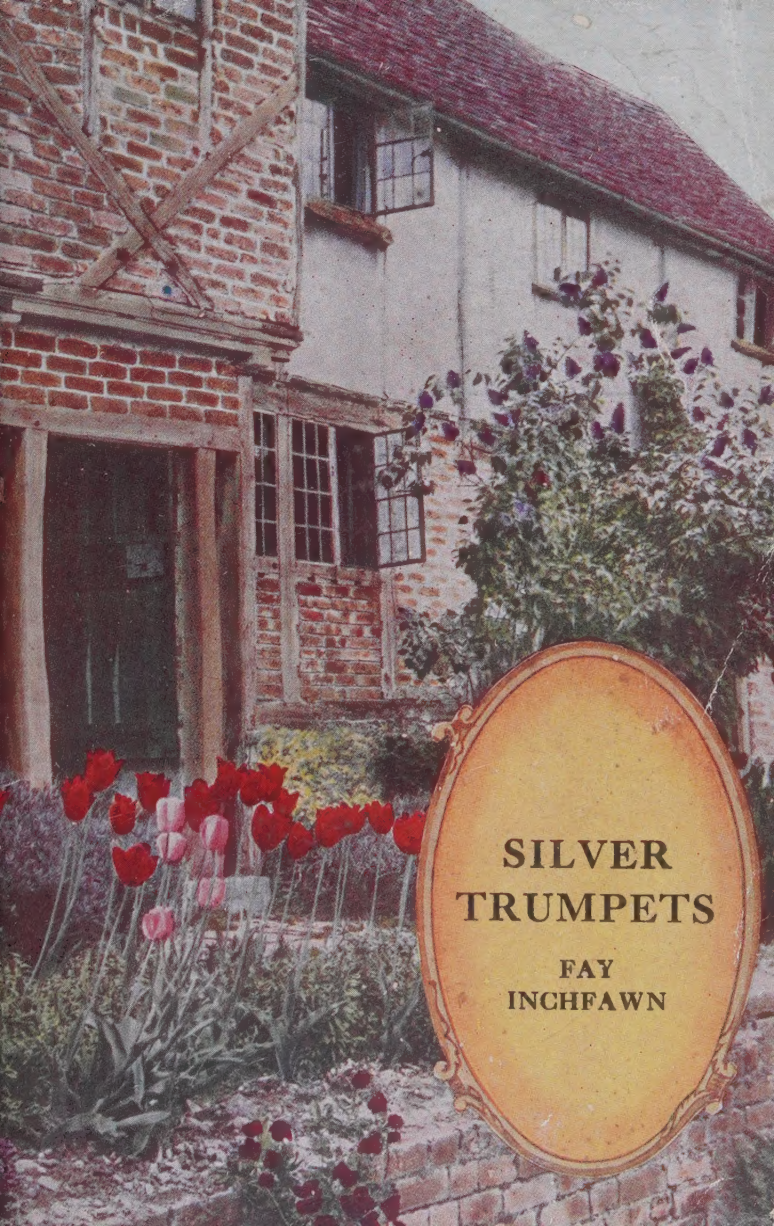
SILVER
TRUMPETS
FAY
INCHFAWN

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SILVER TRUMPETS

By FAY INCHFAWN

VERSE

Verses From a Chimney Corner
Verse Book of a Garden
Will You Come as Well?
Dreams on the Golden Road
Poems From a Quiet Room
Songs of the Ups and Downs
Through the Windows of a Little House
Homely Verses of a Home Lover

PROSE

The House of Life
The Life Book of Mary Watt
The Day's Journey
A Book of Remembrance
Silver Trumpets
Sweet Water and Bitter. (A Novel)
Adventures of a Homely Woman
Homely Talks of a Homely Woman
Mary: For the Mother-Hearted
Living in a Village

SILVER TRUMPETS

MORE "HOMELY WOMAN" TALKS

BY

FAY INCHFAWN

THIRD ISSUE

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A Road I Used to Know

LAST night, after I got into bed and just before my thoughts went to sleep, a part of me that I call my heart went wandering along a road I used to know. Of course, there was a wind, because that road is on the top of a hill, but it was a nice wind ; not a cutting north-easter that makes a woman button up her coat and bend her head, and struggle for her footing inch by inch.

This wind was a kind, friendly thing, the sort of wind that tells you tales and puts a warm hand under your chin, and smells as though it had been soaked in gorse and sunshine.

Naturally it was May-time, and the hour was 4.30 a.m. Everything that had breath was singing, but the things with feathers

sang louder than the rest. During the ordinary workaday hours you often get solos on this road, also duets, and in the dusk-hour you hear quartets and even choruses. But between four and five in the morning is the grand orchestra. And they are all at it, practising as hard as ever they can, never out of time and never out of tune.

On this road I used to know, my heart is eighteen or thereabouts, and so on we went, passing, for this time at least, the green lane on the left though it beckoned with all its old-time lure. Cow-parsley was growing just inside that ancient gateway, and on either side of the green lane hawthorn bushes were shooting up into trees.

The season was between the may and the rose, so wild apple-blossom was dropping tinted snow on the grassy pathway, and during a momentary pause in the orchestra a blackbird uttered just one haunting phrase alone.

The green lane would have led us to the woods, but the lure of the open road was stronger, and on we went. There were

lambs in the fields that skirted the road I used to know.

Not the first frost-nipped, snow-shrivelled staggering babies that come in the early days of the year. But the cuckoo lambs, who come when the earth is warmed and comforted, when grass is young and juicy, and the nights are not so cold. These lambs are fat and frisky from the first, and with exceeding grace they danced to the skylark's song.

The next landmark was the field-path to the right.

How it called! For I knew that after a few steps of gradual decline it sheered down sharply and suddenly to a bare rugged common, dotted with gorse bushes, and down, down, through a larch glen, where a white horse was always grazing, and so out to the sea-shore. Yes, the field-path called, and yet on we hurried, my heart and I.

Now we reached the part of the road where tall beech hedges shut it in on either side. It was May, and yet the soft silken leaves were only just unfurling; the rich brown of the old leaves still rustled in the

wind and lay at the foot of the hedge like raw sienna washed in with a heavy brush. And through the brown shutters that yet were touched with green, one had glimpses of the channel—gleams of the Welsh hills.

After this, the road I used to know ran helter-skelter down hill and up again the other side. Just in the dip, to the right, there was the Down Farm and, close beside it, a little dingle full of bluebells. They looked like amethysts set amid the emerald of the long grass ; a cluster of larches stood and mounted guard over a little stream ; bluebells leaned over the edges, and when the sun shone full upon them the effect was like that of a sapphire mirrored by a diamond. At the top of the hill, the road swung away to the left and went down towards the valley.

The roads that I know now, are clean and tidy right up to the walls and hedges that bound them, but the road I used to know was continually being encroached upon. Grass had a way of overflowing through the quick-set hedge, then a daisy or two would spring up, and a dandelion ; with presently a

few ragged robins and a constellation of stars of Bethlehem. Bracken fern appeared from nowhere, unclenching knotted fists until a tall army of them fringed the dearest and the best-loved part of the road I used to know.

Now we crossed two fields. At five o'clock on a May morning it is a memorable thing to go through a field of cowslips. It is ever so much more than "going through" which may imply a careless passing of unresponsive feet.

These fields were wet, and the grass was thick. The cowslips were fine, and there were hundreds of purple orchis, as well as bluebells. The path was very narrow, for the grass surged towards it. Soon, it would overwhelm the cowslips. Moon-daisies and clover and jingle-jingles would reign in their stead, and the fields would be "up for mowing." You have to keep to the road then.

There were kingcups over in the marshy ground under the trees, and as we drew nearer we came upon a long shining field-pond. It was not only fringed, but covered

with tall flags of yellow iris. There they lived their lovely lives in a solitude that made the human spirit take off its shoes. The birds knew them, the wind touched them, the sun and the rain had wooed their loveliness till it became visible; now they had let us share their beautiful secret.

We stood still for a long time, thinking, my heart and I. And to the loveliness as we once knew it, and possessed it, we added something. To life as we knew it then, we added life as we know it now. For, then, life stretched a dim, indefinite phantasy built up of dreams; of hopes that might never be fulfilled; of desires that might never be satisfied. Then, it seemed as though the pulsating essence of a soul could never slake its thirst. The flowers, the birds, the quiet pool, only made the thirst more intensely real.

Now, as we left the meadowland, and came out again to the road I used to know, we were conscious of a "*Te Deum*" that was singing in the air, humming with the bees, and whispering among the silken grasses.

At the entrance of the valley, just by the white gateway where the echo still lives, we met them, and talked with them—a great cloud of witnesses—hosts of dreams, which had come true.

And, first, there was that dream of knowing and being sure of God. There was the earnest feeling after Him with fingers that were groping and uncertain. One's thoughts turned towards Him when alone; there were moments when He seemed near and real. But very much oftener than that He appeared vague and far away. Prayer seemed a futile thing; the Book of books stale and uninteresting; and yet, the Dream remained, for it was God-given, and was meant to come true. He had been near all the time, was real and therefore knowable, all the time. It is our own spiritual nature that has to grow before we can be always and increasingly conscious of His reality.

Climb on, young soul! There is nothing covered, but that *shall* be revealed. The treasure was hidden, but only with that end in view—that one day when you were ready

for it, it might be brought to light and given to you as a possession for ever.

Then there was the dream of being able to love and of being beloved. Sometimes this dream loomed up and was more desired than that other dream of knowing God. Yet—the dream was one. The lesser was included in the greater, because Love in its essence is always "of God."

It was not wrong to want love. Those long, long thoughts were not wrong. The road I used to know could tell of many such dreams.

Now that they had come true, we looked each other in the face and smiled. For the fulfilment was a much bigger thing than the hope had ever been. Now we knew that Love was not a little circle with two souls shut inside it, but a gateway leading out into the universe. Nothing is too trivial, nor too difficult, nor too remote, for the consideration of the loving heart. Every other soul is her neighbour.

The other dreams, those of helping the world, of trading with entrusted talents, were but offshoots of the first two. Because,

all that we may ever do is but the outcome of that which we have learned to be.

O road that I used to know, you were only a beginning! The road that I know now is merely a continuation! There is a Road to which these two are leading me. It gleams so white and winds so high that the thought of it is almost dazzling. But wayfaring feet cannot miss it. I shall walk on that Road some day.

The Lost Young Man

IT was " The Shropshire Lad " who coined the phrase, and he had a knack of coining happy phrases.

So many of us know that shy and lonely fellow walking in London streets, while his real true self is back among the hills of Wyre, or listening to the willows whispering above the weirs.

Or perhaps he is at Ludlow Fair, and it is blossom-time, for the " pear stood high and snowed."

He is rich in everything, except coin of the realm, and many of the delights of the fair he is obliged to pass by.

But years roll on, and we find him saying :

" Now times are altered ; if I care
To buy a thing I can.
The pence are here, and here's the fair,
But where's the lost young man ? "

We gather that he would give all that he has become if he might only re-capture that young self.

I love the lilt of his verses, but I sometimes think that there is more than enough sorrowful lament for old things and old days.

How many of our most moving songs are about the banquet-hall deserted, and about the never-will-be-again!

As though youth and the impulses of youth were the only joys worthy of being fulfilled; and the loss of such the only things to be sorrowed over.

I wish that more hopeful songs might be written. Songs *for* youth, if you like, but about the glories of middle and old age—and after.

I would like the Future—the unknown but illimitable Future—to be written of in burning words and set to irresistible music. Music that would haunt one afterwards, and persist until one remembered and repeated the hopeful ideas.

Much has been written, and perhaps even more has been sung, concerning the charms of babyhood, and the winsomeness of childhood.

But there is a further stage. The arms and legs stage! The period of growing pains, when even the body undergoes surprising changes, and new thoughts crowd to the mind in bewildering fashion.

"Rejoice, *O young man*, in thy youth!" sang the sage of long ago; and he meant the word "man" in its broad sense—that is "young human creature," including in his thought the maiden as well as the lad.

And, indeed, youth is an occasion for rejoicing. There is a zest, a joy almost intoxicating, merely in being alive. Hills? Why, it is a pleasure to climb them! Streams? One can leap across them!

Nothing is too remote, no dream too good to come true. There is mystery and there is magic in the every day, and more in the every night.

> "Signs in the dew upon the lawn,
> And a red thrill in every dawn."

For who knows what wonder may be waiting just round the corner? Who can tell what miracle may unfold this very day?

Winds have voices, and stars are com-

rades. Beauty is as painful as home-sickness—when one is young.

And still, every time that February comes round, there is a certain shadowy young ghost who turns and faces me. Something of the hidden witchery that is stirring in the trees, begins to stir in me.

I know as well as you do who and what it is.

It is the "lost young man."

I know this young self very well. She was a dreamer; she was hyper-sensitive, not to say thin-skinned. Some practical folk have even called her sentimental.

Often I have felt inclined to disown her, or to exchange her for a young woman with a sane and practical outlook more suitable for this workaday world.

And yet, in spite of having to face hard facts, and to do combat with everyday troubles, somehow I have never been able to get absolutely rid of her.

She was always popping up her pensive head when I was doing the washing; always dancing somewhere on the hilltops when I was in the midst of spring-cleaning.

Once I looked upon her as a foolish, aimless creature; nowadays, I am beginning to think of her as my most priceless asset.

How, if I had never known *her*, could I hope to understand Bunty?

And Bunty is not the only one. I think that every mother of just one child will understand me when I say that every child has a claim upon me because of my one. The mother of a family has all her work cut out to keep up with her own rightful tasks; but the mother of one has time to let her heart lean out to many another.

And in many—oh, in so very many—I find traces of that dreamy wistful soul who was once myself.

A somewhat whimsical man whom I know had made a bit of a "corner" in fireworks. Yet when he was congratulated he said:

"Yes, but it's rather funny. When I was a little chap I'd have given my head for a twopenny firework, but I hadn't twopence to spend. Now I can have tons of them, I don't want them. But that's life all over!"

"Is it?"

I heard that that same "pessimist" spent the evening of November 5th letting off expensive fireworks on his own lawn, while a crowd of extremely young people (of both sexes) rushed after him, clinging to his coat-tails, and shrieking with joy as every rocket went up and every shower of golden rain came down.

Oh, believe me, the "lost young man" can often quite easily be found again!

I do not forget that there are many who have never been able to give the "young man," as we are thinking of him, any chance at all.

That tremulous aspiring self has scarcely had an opportunity of existing. The dreams have been crushed down, the hopes could not have a hearing, and so at last they have been stifled into silence.

There are young backs which have had to shoulder heavy responsibility.

I am thinking of sons who have had to step in and take the part of "father" to young brothers and sisters. Of daughters who have tended ailing and ageing parents.

Whose individuality seems to have been absorbed in the needs of the family.

These "props," these "mainstays," are to be found in every community. We all know them. Often they have become what we are inclined to call uninteresting.

The devoted son is quite frequently "an old woman." The nurse-daughter is often old-maidish and fidgety.

Life—or that which we call life—has slipped away. And they are on the shady side of the road, without having had a chance to disport themselves in the sunshine.

I remember seeing a tall, grey-haired woman carefully helping an aged man up and down the road.

Her face was so placid, and so matured, I thought at first that she was his wife. But I learned that she was his daughter.

He always spoke of her so tenderly.

"She is my M.A.," he would say proudly. "You didn't know that my daughter held a degree? Well, she does. She is my MINISTERING ANGEL."

Ah, there are a good many M.A.'s about, only we are slow to recognize them. They

are so busy making beef-tea, and filling hot-water bottles, guiding halting feet, and always sleeping with one ear open.

The M.A. must always get home early. She is never free to stray far afield, must never linger over a high tide or a sunset.

At a meeting or a recital she must leave before the end. A morning in bed is out of the question ; and the week-end holiday jaunt is not possible for M.A.'s.

Breezes from the outer world are sometimes wafted in to her. Her contemporaries are married and have children. Or they have distinguished themselves in art or medicine. Perhaps they have become missionaries, with many a thrilling tale of life beyond the seas.

And the M.A. listens and applauds. She is asked to weddings. She is invited to children's parties !

Does she never at such times feel her old self pulling at her elbow ?

And then—often suddenly—the strong "ties" are snapped, and the Ministering Angel finds herself free.

Now, if she wishes, she can go out and stay

out till late. Now she can read the books she used to like; can get unbroken nights, and rush off for a week-end at any time.

Yes "here's the pence, and here's the fair," but the old zest in such things is missing.

The M.A. is afraid to linger in lonely places alone. Reading tires her eyes. She does not sleep well, and she is apt to become obsessed by trifles.

Perhaps she repeats herself, or clears her throat, or laughs nervously at nothing.

Leagues seem to stretch between her and the younger generation.

It is not so easy to find this "lost young man." And we ought to act very kindly, and to be very tolerant towards the loser.

If she ever opens her heart to us, let us tell her that God never has defrauded any of His creatures. Her loss will be made good.

Some day the kind Hand which seemed to withhold will be opened wide, and will satisfy the inmost desire of every living thing.

There is a situation sadder than that of the Ministering Angel.

I mean, when the man or the woman who promised to have and to hold until death, has, for some reason, lost possession of the priceless thing upon which all married life depends.

That which once seemed so desirable—the joy of home-making and the nearness of the everyday—has lost its charm:

> "Here's the pence, and here's the fair,
> But where's the lost young man?"

Ah, where?

You may speak of him contemptuously as a poor fool. You may think of him with bitter irony—and yet, what would you not give to get him back again?

Perhaps you will say that he is dead. Perhaps if you and I dared to talk of such things together, you would be able to mention the circumstances which enfeebled his health and brought about his decease.

I rather fancy it was not battle, nor murder, nor sudden death, but a lingering malady, spread over months and years.

And when you are quite quiet and alone, I think that you look back over the track

and you wonder whether you were quite wise and fair to that young man. Whether, perhaps, if you had treated him differently he might have survived.

A little more staid, maybe, and a little more reasonable, but still *alive*.

If you have been thinking on these lines, it is sure evidence that the young man is not hopelessly lost.

You can find him again if you are sufficiently in earnest.

Oh, I know that there are side-issues; that there are long and winding avenues of old mistakes (not all yours) leading away from those halcyon days when "the pear stood high and snowed."

But these winding ways are not worth traversing, are they? The side-issues are not essential to straightforward progress. You will pass them by, will you not?

Try not to feel imposed upon; nor injured; nor that you are being sacrificed.

Try to see that life, *just as it is*, may yet be transfigured into life as you hoped it would be.

It may be too late to "get." However

much you may deserve it, you may never in this world obtain the love and consideration you think you have a right to expect.

But it is never too late to give. And the most difficult nature, the most impossible personality, cannot prevent you from climbing this hill-top, nor from standing in this holy place.

The busy man whose life is a prolonged rush, and the woman for whom the days are never long enough, are each apt to think with complacency of a time when they will have earned the right to sit and be waited upon.

Yet when that time actually arrives, will they enjoy it as much as they now think they will?

For all of us, if we live long enough, there will come a time when the circle of friendship must narrow. Like that old carnival called "Musical Chairs," we go round in the charmed circle, till first one and then another of the merry party drops out, and at length only one remains.

That is one of the sorrows of advancing age. Friends are so often dying. It is then that the memory of the " lost young man " rises up so vividly and almost seems to mock at his own old age.

" When I was young " is a phrase often on the lips. And thoughts in early morning and late at night revolve round school-fellows, lovers, youthful pranks, and innocent follies.

Ancient triumphs of coquetry, tales of prowess in the playing field are recounted in detail. Names are mentioned, often quite unfamiliar to the listener, but ah, so well known to the *raconteur*.

They are all dead now.

And now it is an effort to walk; an effort to lace one's shoes; an effort to go upstairs.

Mental power is not so swift as it used to be. Conversation takes longer to reach the brain.

There is time now to sit still. But oh, for one of the driving, hurrying days when life was hard but full of flavour!

Is this circumstance quite hopeless, then?

No, indeed. There is comfort and a sure and certain hope for the aged.

As one after another the dear ties are snapped, and the loved ones go home, so Heaven becomes a place which is peopled with familiar folk. What are they doing? What are they thinking?

The God-Man, with the tender voice, Who whispers courageous words to His old disciple, is the One around Whom these friends cluster as planets around the sun.

Some day soon the next great step will be taken. The river will be forded, the shining land will be a reality.

Flesh may fail, but, through the only Saviour, that which we call spirit survives.

It is a natural and an understandable thing that young men should see visions, but God goes a whole league further than that.

He lets His *old* men dream dreams. Dreams of a future, so gloriously free, so wondrously unshackled, that the spirit sighs to be in it.

Such dreams are certain to come true.

The Little Room

IT was not so very long ago that Bunty asked me to let her have a room of her own.

I was very much surprised, because she had always been rather attached to my apron-strings, and I thought she would feel lonely at night without the friendly bed beside her. Perhaps this thought showed itself in my eyes, for she added quickly: "It isn't that I don't like being with you, mother; only, you see—well—*I get no privacy!*"

So that settled it, and I moved Bunty's bed to a little room at the top of the house. I bought a small washstand and dressing-chest and put all her possessions up there.

That night, after I had kissed her and shut the door, and left her to enjoy her

" privacy," I found myself thinking solemn thoughts about the little room.

I knew that there was no need for apprehension because Bunty wanted to be by herself. For every healthy, normal young soul has to be a pathfinder and must go out alone. I knew that there were thoughts she wanted to think, dream countries which she wanted to explore. I knew that her soul's little wings were unfolding, and that even I, could never fly *for* her.

I hope that her room may be to her what my little room is to me.

Only the pictures that I really love and often want to look at are there. I have a large framed photograph of the Meeting Room where I sat, a small nervous child, among the saints of riper years. I can point out the corner where I had my first Sunday-school class; and the place where I stood to be married to John.

Then I have a little picture cut out of an old magazine and neatly framed in black. It is all in soft violets and dark blues. Two shepherds on a night-clad hill are looking down at a sleeping village. In one low

dwelling shines a solitary chink of light, and above, in the firmament, there is a star.

The books that I keep in my little room are not the ordinary volumes that I can read and assimilate in any company; but the special friends which one can go to for comfort over and over again.

I am not wrong, surely, in thinking that such a room has a personality.

I suppose that every one of us can go back in fancy to some such place where the Ideal became the Real. It may not even have been a "room." It may have been a corner of a field, a nook in a wood, or even a bank under a hedge; just some familiar place where certain affairs of the Soul were transacted. We cannot set them down in cold print, for they are too precious.

John tells me that when he was a lad he had no room of his very own, and so he built a sort of wigwam in the garden. He could only just get into it, but he says he had wonderful thoughts there. Such dreams! Such aspirations!

Years afterwards he possessed a room where he could burn midnight oil and trouble

the gold gateways of the stars. I never saw this room. Yet I know it. And I think that you know it.

The little room shares our secrets. The impassioned soliloquy. The treasures of the old desk. The first crude attempts to put experience into prose or verse. We are as shy over these things as a young man over his first love affair!

But the little room knows all about them and tells no tales.

The little room waits for us. Something gracious, something welcoming, seems to meet us there; yet this something never reproaches us when we seek it after long absence. There we may be our true selves. Never diffident; never apologetic.

No wonder we think tenderly of the little room. It may be small—but how high it is!

It is a very human picture that George Eliot draws of Hetty Sorrel in her bedroom.

The pretty little creature was accustomed to dress herself up in certain finery and to admire her own reflection in the small looking-glass. The things she did not dare to wear in public she now put on, and

pirouetted up and down the attic floor, turning her charming head from side to side, fingering her ear-rings, and trying to imagine herself a great lady.

Poor Hetty! Hers seems a very sad and futile way of using that great possession—a little room. It was meant for far more.

And that, I think, is why "the little room" is, more often than not, situated "upstairs."

The casual caller and the pleasant acquaintance each have access to the drawing-room, perhaps even to the garden, but only one's intimates are invited to go upstairs.

I know that a bungalow can be a most delightful proposition, and yet somewhere within me there is an old-fashioned prejudice in favour of going upstairs! For I seem in a measure to get above the things which constitute the usual daily round, I seem to enter into another realm when I leave the kitchen and the living-rooms and go upstairs.

I know very well that this means effort, that when one's legs are very tired and one's head is giddy it is far easier to turn into one of the downstairs rooms. But how often the

effort is overpaid by the cool rush of air through the landing window, or even by the restful sight of the little room when one reaches it.

And if the literal room has such an effect upon the tired body, what about the deeper experience behind that? I want to write about the little room now, not so much as a structure of four walls with a window and a door, but as a *place* where the spirit may find refreshment and rest.

For helpful and intimate as books and pictures may be, the little room has a higher office.

We need to turn our earth-worn faces towards the stars. We need to talk with, and listen to, the Ineffable.

He has much to say to us that we cannot ever hear unless we deliberately hold open the innermost door to Him and take time to be holy.

Hetty Sorrel knew nothing about that. To her the privilege of being alone in the attic meant merely that she was free to gratify her vain little heart.

And yet there was in her, as there is in

each of us, an ego which has no relation save the great Kinsman. We are joined to Him in ways we little guess. We can never be our true selves until we have had to do with Him.

One of the terrible drawbacks of overcrowding is that there can be no privacy for the body. And the awful handicap of an overcrowded life is that there is no privacy and no still hour for the soul.

This is a real calamity, far greater than it sounds, for it means that the part of us which is most truly ourselves is getting the poorest chance; the part where the Holiest of Guests may live; the part which, when the body fails and the mind grows dim, will survive and continue its aim.

Oh, believe me, the little room is not so much a luxury as a necessity, if the soul-life is to grow.

It has very rightly been said that if Christian people treated their children in the same manner that they treat their own souls they would speedily be summoned for the cruelty of starving the poor mites as well as overcrowding them.

We read the lives of the saints, and we find that they spent long hours in holy meditation; that some rocky cave or stone-floored cell was the "little room" in which they met and talked with God.

But while we recognise the heights to which they climbed and think wistfully of their spiritual stature, our sound common-sense tells us that the cloistered life is not possible for us. Could Catherine of Siena or Francis of Assisi have withdrawn themselves to mountain solitudes if little ones had been clinging round their skirts and porridge burning in the kitchen?

And so we are apt to argue that, in the rush of life to-day, the quiet lull is an impossibility.

But, my dear friend, I think that life in every age has been a rush, and that a determined effort has always been necessary if men would leave the crowd and enter into the little room to talk secrets with God.

I cannot get away from the fact that when I have been on holiday, and all the time there is, has been my own, I have still found it an effort to withdraw from earthly things and

spend even a quarter of an hour in the atmosphere of the little room. There seems to be an opposing Force which would keep one from the intimate experience which being in a little room with only one Companion is bound to bring.

And, why?

Because the man, woman or child who deliberately makes time to say "Here am I," is immediately in the position where God can make Himself known. Just the very act of presenting oneself morning by morning is laying a sort of foundation on which the Master Builder can build up an intimacy.

And let us not forget that the length of time we spend on our knees is not the chief point of the exercise. Neither are the "lovely feelings" we get. Sometimes we seem to feel nothing at all; there is no sweet consciousness of the Saviour; no deep truth seems to take hold of us; and we go back to our duties feeling disappointed.

I have been greatly cheered in reading Rutherford's Letters. His loving soul longed for the dainties of Christ's banqueting house; he was hungry and thirsty for the manifesta-

tion of his Master's love. Shut out from his beloved Anwoth, and shut into the little room of his stone-girt prison, he with his Lord held tryst. And often, often, there were no special revelations, the deep sweet well of love seemed dried up. He had to step out, not on his feelings, but just on *faith*. No one came to see him, and his friends were long in writing to him.

Dear friend of mine, has it been just so with you?

Perhaps after the effort of finding a place and making a time for the daily Interview, you have found it disappointing.

Take courage, for there is always His promise (Rev. iii. 20). He has come in, even though you were not aware of it. He has drawn nigh, even though you did not feel Him near. His fine courtesy leads Him first of all to be your Guest, but a time will come when you and He will change places. In your little room, with all that it represents of the real "you," He will take His place as Host.

To a Bride

MY dear, there seems to be very little for me to say to you. I have been sitting for such a long time with my pen in hand, that the ink is almost dry, and even now, though the thoughts brim over, words to express them come slowly and awkwardly.

I loved looking at your presents and hearing about your plans. And then, when we went upstairs and you showed me that white gown and the long lacy veil, something very old and very young seemed to steal out from me, and to stand face to face with that age-long wonder which we call a "bride."

I mean not one bride nor two that I have known, but the spirit of all true and lovely brides, welded into one sweet personality. I seemed to see her, walking along a green

lane flanked on either side with hawthorn grown into trees, and each tree clad in bridal white.

At the end of the lane I saw a white gate. Overhead a lark was singing, and the bride was looking, listening.

"My dear," said my soul, to the white soul of her, "I would not, if I could, waylay you. Who am I that I should walk beside you along this green lane, and try to tell you something of what lies beyond the white gate? Here, an angel would fear to tread, and an archangel would hesitate to whisper."

Then I thought how sometimes the Ineffable Love has passed by angels and has used fools instead. Not fools who rush in blindly, but those who, with covered faces and loosened shoes, have listened meekly for a message.

It is in no wild rush of dictatorial emphasis that I am writing to you, and I think that you will bear with what I am trying to say.

There is an element of quite uncommon sense in that ancient dictum concerning the robing of every bride. We all know that she must wear

"Something old,
Something new,
Something borrowed,
And something blue."

And the Something Old which I saw mirrored so clearly in your eyes is that very old-fashioned but lovely thing which is called being "in love."

Shallow folk have scoffed at it, and cynics have said it is material too flimsy to outlast the climbing of the white gate. But you and I know better. We know that she who robes herself on her wedding-day without this "Something Old" is more to be pitied than the loneliest spinster.

For this "Something Old" is that which clothed and made lovely the first woman on the day the Lord builded her; it is that which Isaac saw gleaming through Rebecca's veil when she lighted off the camel and he took her into his mother's tent. This "Something Old" is the talisman that has made your lover the only one in all the world for you. And you must wear it long and long after you have taken off your orange blossom and your bridal white. Its

fabric ought to be so durable that it will last you until you put on immortality.

You ought to know how strong it is, for you have had a hand in the weaving. It was a thought-garment first of all, nebulous as a dream—your man, as he must be if ever you were to be content with him. You had thought of him and dreamed of him long before he came. And when he came, when the dream was superseded by reality, you still went on with your weaving. And now tender words, eloquent twilights, and long silences have been added to the dream-material till it is so fine you wonder how it can be that anything so royal should be your very own.

It is all very right and proper *now*. Quite seemly and suitable wear for a bride. But, my child, I want you never to be ashamed of it. It will not be long before curious eyes will look at you, trying to decide whether you still possess that "Something Old." You need not wear your heart upon your sleeve; indeed, I doubt very much whether a leal true heart *can* be worn in so precarious a place!—and yet I would not, if I were you,

hide away under a cloak of flippancy or indifference that "Something Old." Guard it, cherish it by all the means you can; be very careful to mend a tear directly you perceive it.

Remember what precious material went to its making. Remember the whole substance of your house will not be able to purchase another such garment. Such things are not made ready-to-wear.

Something New! Yes, it is new. For never in your experience has this marvellous thing been yours to wear before.

How happy is the bride who on her wedding morning can look into her bridegroom's face knowing that she is bringing him something new—something utterly untarnished! Herself, as God thought her. Not perfect in attainment—oh no! But perfect in this, that she is growing towards perfection.

Now, if never before, she will be glad that her "something new" is without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

She will not now feel inclined to laugh at that sweet old word "puritan." She will

bless the hands which set bounds and gentle restraints about her maiden pathway. Because now, upon this joyous morning, she is going to possess such a great inheritance, and is going to it with untrammelled hands, with unsullied soul.

Dear child, let me entreat you to take no serious account of "omens." A trembling girl-bride whom I knew, had the misfortune to break a small hand-mirror just before starting on the bridal journey. There were not wanting horror-stricken eyes and doubtful lips. There were friends (?) who foretold disaster of some sort, and who looked coldly on the unconscious bridegroom.

Years have passed since then. Slow years of quiet happiness for both. Their children rise up and call them blesséd, and that hand-mirror did excellent service. It cured a whole family of superstition.

Something borrowed! I take this to mean something you have not hitherto worn yourself, but which some other has. Perhaps this may refer to that old question of experience. People tell us we must buy

or weave it ourselves, or it never will be our very own. That, in a certain sense, is true.

And yet I fancy we ought to profit by a "borrowed" experience. If I know that a ship has come to grief on a certain quicksand, I shall be exceedingly careful when I have to pilot my own vessel past that very spot.

And that is why I am going to ask you to "borrow," not from me alone, but from every other loving faithful wife, this resolve. That you will not in your married life be content to be an amateur.

The wedded state is not a mould into which two persons are suddenly thrust, and from which they as suddenly emerge, indissolubly united.

This running in double-harness is not the simple affair that some writers of fiction depict for us. Neither is it the terrible heartrending adventure described so graphically by others. All the same, it takes time and skill and patience to make a real success of it. I remember John and I laughed very much over a clever cartoon which came our way soon after we were married. The

young wife was depicted saying to a row of interested friends:

"But, you know, my husband was *never* like other men."

We laughed, and the laugh was against me. But I still think that the young wife was right.

Every woman's husband is—and ought to be—unique! And that is why I am suggesting that you shall make a science of your new life. Give the most careful consideration to your man. He is worth understanding. You have never thoroughly explored him yet. You will often be discovering new territory. And I am sure that you want to know the little bits of waste land and the lonely places; anyone can walk in the broad avenues but you want to have a knowledge of the side-tracks.

It will help you very much in your exploring if you can put away from you the thought that surely it is his "place" to try to understand *you*. He, who ought to be bending all his energies to the delightful task of loving and cherishing the precious thing he has managed to secure.

If I were writing to your bridegroom, instead of to you, I should have many a solemn word on this subject to set before him.

But to you I would like to whisper that one of the elementary rules concerning your future is that you shall learn when and how to practise the gentle art of Giving In.

No, I am not suggesting that you shall become the Door-mat Wife with the Adoring Eyes. But I do advise that you shall train yourself to obey the Law of the Wood, which is, in the words of Mrs. Gatty's parable, *to be as accommodating as possible.*

It is a great wise law, not assimilated in one day. It is so much easier to be spreading and spiky, and entirely within one's rights. For, let me say it softly, there are trials and perplexities even in that new life on the other side of the white gate. And you will still be the dear human self you have always been. He will still be the mortal man that even the best of husbands cannot avoid being.

And that is why you must not fail to take with you something that is higher, greater,

nobler than any earthly attribute. I mean —*Something Blue!*

For blue is the heavenly colour. A symbol of that which is above and beyond our earthliness. You, my dear one, with all your high resolves and your splendid ideals, must not even for one day try to do without the Something Blue.

You know, better than I can tell you, what that implies. It means a solemn and definite and daily approach to the Lord of your being. I need not suggest to you how that interview shall be conducted. You will know.

But I will tell you how by this means you will learn the marvellous potency of thoughts over words.

It is not what we say, but that which we really are, that can reach out and have influence upon the lives we most desire to bless.

You will not easily then fall into even the ordinary mistakes that married folk are apt to make. You will not try to gain any point by means of tears, nor by argument, nor by making your man feel a brute.

You will not, to air your grievance, confide to any third party anything concerning your husband.

You will always keep carefully sealed the door to the inner circle; for, within, there must never be more than two persons—himself and you.

Transplanted

HAVE you ever been to a wood, a dearly loved wood, and taken some of its treasures away? That is what I did last spring. After the year's first flowers had gone, and when early summer was on her way, I went, with a basket and trowel, and got what I had always wanted for my garden—roots of wood anemones and of white woodruff.

This was not the easy matter I had thought it would be. Delving valiantly beneath an oak, where the green fern-like anemone leaves were still showing, there was little result, for who would ever believe what countless rootlets existed under the thin brown soil? The population of a wood is appalling, and its real true life lies beneath and not above the ground.

As tenderly as I could I got those slender things like soft brown twigs—the roots of my anemones—but with all my care I maimed them and tore the tendrils of the friends they left behind.

"You will, I hope, forgive me," said my spirit to the Spirit of the Wood. "I am taking something which belongs to you, but it is because I want the thought of you to be with me on my common days when I cannot get out to see you. I will not tell you that you have plenty more such treasures and that therefore you cannot possibly miss these. I am asking you to spare me a part of yourself; more than that, I am asking you to go home with me in my basket to live in a corner of my garden."

"Since you put it in that way," replied the Wood Anemones, "we will see what we can do. But you have torn us up by the roots and part of us is still under the oak."

"We," said the Woodruff with dignity, "are not *parts* of the Wood. We *are* the Wood."

"I know that, you poor things," said I

in a humble manner; "and it is a great thing I am asking. All the same——"

I hurried home and I hid them in the soft shady soil near a spreading Buddleia. The evening was mild, a warm soft rain began to fall. I hoped for the best, and was not put to shame.

Those dear things took root in the strange soil, and this spring I found them again. In a corner of my garden I have the Wood.

That is all that we know about it. We cannot enter into the experiences below ground which followed that transplanting. The rootlets reaching out and doing their level best to accommodate themselves to the new environment. The contact with other unfamiliar roots. Missing perhaps the minerals which were in the old woody soil; taking into themselves new elements not so congenial, and yet with it all, gradually settling down to wait in silence through the hours of winter for the old call of the sun. We can only guess at it. And wonder at the patient reasonableness of that which we call wild nature.

In human nature, transplanting is usually

a woeful business. It hurts. Even when quite possibly the transplanting has been voluntary, and greatly desired. Yet *after* the deed is done, and not before, is the season when one has time to go into the matter of damaged roots.

When John and I started keeping house I thought that I should never tire of the dear little tidy kitchen, the immaculate living-room and the pretty drawing-room. It gave me great pleasure to arrange and re-arrange the furniture, to purchase, and then to cook, meals just for two. I took immense pride in my fire-irons and my curtains, and in the sideboard heaped with wedding presents.

And then, not suddenly, but gradually, the flavour began to ooze out of these things. Even having my own latch-key ceased to fill me with importance. Because, standing outside my own door one evening and fumbling for that key, I found that I was thinking how lonely it all was! How I wished that, instead of letting myself into the empty house, I might find my feet upon the door-mat of a certain well-known porch,

where the door was seldom fastened because there was always someone at home.

How much nicer it would be to turn the handle and just step into a home where warmth from all the rooms came out to meet you. To stand in a hall where the stair-carpet was not so new, and the hat-stand not so lonesomely tidy, but littered with old hats, masculine and feminine.

And, besides, a house comfortably populated with people was surely far more desirable than one that half the time had no one in it but a very solitary woman. There were so many evenings when John had to be at his office, so many days when he could only rush in for his meals.

Yes, after the first few months the new life had ceased to be adventurous, and had become monotonous instead. Every week brought the same duties. Hall and passage to be swept and mopped. Dustbin to be put out, meals to be got, clothes to be washed, aired and mended. And all this to be accomplished without a soul to praise or to blame. Certain tasks which I attempted then, would at home have brought a storm

of horrified censure about my ears. But now such circumstances passed unnoticed. How was John to realize that washing and ironing and moving furniture demanded such a colossal output of strength, that a little praise and astonishment, or even dismay, on his part, would have helped his foolish wife and have livened things up all round?

Summer marched on, and the town—it was a seaside place—was gay with holiday-makers. I used to watch them going by, groups of jubilantly happy persons trekking towards the sea. Fathers and mothers walking with their grown-up daughters made me envious. What times *we* could have had if only my home-folks had been there! I went about among the throngs, the only solitary soul it seemed to me in all that throbbing, laughing crowd. John was up to his eyes in work, and I sat alone on the moonlit promenade listening to the band, sick to death of the merriment all round, and yet reluctant to go home alone to the empty house.

As the clock struck ten I used to creep up the still crowded street and wait outside his

office till he came. Sometimes I tapped at the door, and he put out a distracted head with ruffled hair. I had a feeling that he never would have come home if I had not fetched him.

Poor John! He, too, had his trials in those days.

Sometimes I went for long walks. And how fond in my maiden days I had been of taking long rambles quite alone! How boring it had seemed then, when folks attached themselves to me, and talked about food and blankets and floor polish. But *now* I would cheerfully have conversed about Hottentots or on any other subject, if only there had been anybody to converse with.

Speaking of the country, I discovered that those roads were not like the old roads that I knew. In the West Land where I belonged we had little friendly lanes and fields with real green growing hedges. In our walls all kinds of tiny living things flourished. In their own language, every flower and every bird had something to say to me.

But in the East Land the roads were

chalky and white and bare. There were scarcely any trees, and there were no lanes. The barley and the rye grew right out to the edge of the road without any fence at all. To me such things looked hard and crude and unfriendly. The very speech of the natives seemed ugly in the extreme.

I did not know then how cumulative a thing love is. The spirit of true comradeship is not born in an hour. It takes time to send down roots after being transplanted. Attachment to places, or ways, or people, is not, as a rule, a sudden thing. It comes out of quiet experiences, one piled upon another, and covers a period of years. I thought with longing of the wooded hills of Somerset, simply because all my unmarried life had been spent in that delectable country "where the cider apples grow!" And because there was still and always had been the solid background of staunchly faithful folk who loved me.

There was another thing, and I am telling you about this in case there may be other young wives who feel the same—I found out how difficult it is to keep in touch with

the spiritual side of life when one is quite alone.

I had not realized how blessed, how real, and how helpful is the "communion of saints." Indeed, I fancy I had not thought of that at all until the tacklings were loosed, the anchors taken up, and the little ship of my soul found herself for the first time voyaging.

Sunday, for instance, was now such a different day from the quiet, restful season it had been in the old home. There, more often than not, we had with us for the week-end an ambassador from the highest Court of all. And—this was so ordinary a thing, I had no idea I was laying up a memory—we went leisurely down country lanes and over fields to a tiny meeting-house.

My father and the preacher were usually in front. They discoursed about certain old and precious themes. Pausing on the brow of the hill, with umbrellas pointing upwards, they reminded one another that as the heavens were high above the earth so great was God's mercy!

I badly missed the atmosphere of those

quiet holy days. For Sunday morning in our early married life was a vastly different proposition. There was so much even in a little house that must be done before one could go out that very often we took the line of least resistance and stayed at home. And in the evening, sitting in an unfamiliar building, trying to follow an unfamiliar service, there was all the time a miserable feeling of aloofness and unreality, as though nobody belonged to us nor cared about us!

Thinking over those days, I am inclined to smile at that home-sick woman who found it so difficult to understand herself. Because not for worlds would she—even if she could—have left her John and returned to the old roof-tree. *That* would not have met the case. What she did not, and could not realize then, was that "we pay the old to gain the new." After all, that is only fair and honest trading.

To quote a truism, we can none of us expect to begin where our parents leave off. I once thought this only applied to one's banking account. I realize now that it had reference to one's outlook as well.

That "home" upon which I, with such wistful feelings, was looking back, was not made in a day. That "atmosphere" in which it was so delightful to live was not bestowed upon my father's house the moment he and my mother stepped into it. *They had to make it.* It was something they had to think, something they had to dream, before it could ever be crystallized into a reality that others could feel.

John and I were young apprentices at that sort of thing. We had thought ourselves very tasteful in our choice of furniture, and quite old hands in the matter of hanging pictures. But at real home-making we were only novices.

I am not contending for the superiority of women over men when I say that I think the essence of a home is very largely and preponderatingly due to the influence of the wife. The under-current of her personality, the atmosphere in which her spirit habitually lives, makes a deeper impression than her husband's can. A man is still, even in these modern days, very much what his wife makes him. And it is no light thing for any

woman to have a man in the making under her care, especially when they are both of them many miles from their own folk, perhaps in a foreign land where conditions and customs are every one so different from the old ways of life.

I transplanted my anemones because of something lovely in the wood, something I wanted for my own. I think—and you will understand why I say this—that every good John transplants his bride for the same reason.

A young soldier going out to Flanders with the shadow of death upon him said that in some corner of a foreign field there would be dust that was "*for ever England.*" It could not, and should not, he felt, ever be absorbed into the foreign soil.

Some glimmering of this idea came to me as I laid the meals and cleaned the rooms in the little house. I decided I would, as far as possible, make my home like that other dear home I had left behind. So that the world should be not poorer but richer for the severance. It should have in it another

home with the same ideals, though there were weary miles between.

I thought I would consider John more and myself less! When, as sometimes happened, he came rushing in for his tea long before the usual time, I bustled about and got it cheerfully, though that meant a longer evening than ever for me.

Then I did a bold thing. I became a reporter! I am ashamed to say I had rather looked down on the sort of meetings John was obliged to attend. That kind of journalism made no appeal to me, and I had thought contemptuously of it.

But now I offered to help John by going to certain meetings for him and writing up the notes at home. He agreed to the proposal, and was, I think, relieved that his wife should have a new interest! But my first attempts were far too flowery, and had to be cut to pieces in a way that roused my indignation. After a time I learned to be brief and accurate and only occasionally descriptive.

I attended many weird concerts, and recorded numbers of dull speeches, "wrote

up" particulars of a new boarding-house, and my eulogies were quoted in its tariff.

I think that any attempt to adjust ourselves to environment must bring its own reward. John and I had now so many interests in common. We could discuss people and events. I began going to his office on Thursday evenings, we corrected proofs till our hands were black with printer's ink, and it was midnight before we got home.

People began to nod to me as I went through the street; things were getting friendly all round, the house was not lonely now, for certain delightful women came in and out. Sunday was once more a glad day. I began to think that in some ways the East coast of Kent was almost as beautiful as Somerset. Those broad acres of rye, with scarlet poppies close to the edge of the white cliffs, how gorgeous they were! And how amusing was the Kentish accent.

Then to the quiet tidy house came a little Kentish person who had no language but a cry.

Lovers—in Heaven?

YOU have asked me a question which cannot be answered all in a minute. It is a very ancient problem. I am often coming up against it, and I believe that we all have to face it, either for ourselves, or for those very dear to us.

> "Will there be love in Heaven,
> The sort that lovers know?"

Will there? Or will it all be merged into one great tide of altruistic love?

To be perfectly honest, it does not meet the case when kind friends tell us that God will be all in all; that we shall not *then* need the comfort nor the support of another heart; because Christ will be a Spiritual Bridegroom and no other lover will be necessary.

In our heads we know all that wonderfully well. And yet how can a woman receive it and feel satisfied with it, when her heart is hungry and thirsty for love—of the sort that lovers know? The sort, too, that husbands and wives know. That quiet restful love which is born out of many days of facing life together. This is not the amazing flame which lit the earlier moments, it is more like the homely light of a lamp which burns on unflickering and undimmed through hours of darkness. It has for its foundation not one transcendent moment, but a steady stream of experience. Every day kindnesses that John has shown; his habit of shouldering difficulties with the gas-fitter and the plumber; and of always answering the door when a knock comes late at night. This sort of love runs like a golden thread through all the current happenings. It makes a wife defer judgment, and delay decision till the matter can be talked over with her John.

Is this strong, true, beautiful bond going to be loosed when that change called death takes place? And when we meet and

recognize the dear one yonder, is it to be merely as one of an unnumbered multitude, no more to us than any other redeemed soul will be?

There is many a woman whose lover has died before the earthly tie called marriage could bind them. And there are other women who have never had that exceedingly precious gift, a real, true, and an acknowledged lover.

What about these? Are they to go through this life feeling that they have missed something, which even God Himself will never make up to them? I am afraid that a good many women feel just like that. "Can God be good," they say, "when apparently He has let His creature be defrauded? Having made her with a great gift for loving, why has He left her in mid air, with nothing adequate to spend her love upon?"

And when it is suggested that surely in the by-and-by all longing must be satisfied, then the statement printed in large capitals is hoisted high:

"The Bible says that there will be no marrying in Heaven."

But does it really say just that and leave it there?

Dear child, when we are reading the Bible, we need to remember the tender loving Heart which is behind every sentence. Words are, after all, poor things and they often obscure the real true thoughts of our earthly friends. It is no wonder, then, that we cannot catch the meaning of our Heavenly Lover by just a surface reading, nor by a phrase caught here or there and taken out of its context.

That often-quoted text concerning marriage, which seems to ring a death-knell to our longings, had really no connection whatever with the point we are considering.

The great men of the hour were trying to lure God's Son into unguarded speech. They came to Him with a trumped-up tale, and the point of it was not the sanctity of marriage, but the possibility of resurrection.

Their story of the woman who had been the property of seven different men is a powerful searchlight upon their hateful ideas of marriage. To them a wife was merely a chattel. She was purchased very much as one bought an ox. And having purchased her, she was the absolute property of her husband. She was not his dear companion. She was his exclusive and very useful bearer of burdens, and no other man could lay a finger on her.

Their argument, put baldly, was this: "There can be no such thing as resurrection because there would be too many complications, too much quarrelling over possessions which could not be shared."

As He listened to all that they had to say, I think His brave heart sank. For they were right off the map. With all their learning they had not come anywhere within the remotest area of God's thoughts concerning them. The very law that they were bringing forward in support of their story was distorted beyond recognition.

For God's thought in Deuteronomy xxv. 5 was like an exquisite jewel. It was

heavenly music set to earthly words. *He* knew it well; for, before Moses could write it, He had thought it, and had woven it in among His pleasurable things.

A little clan, all loving one another, and living together in unity under one head. That was the setting. The head of this family would be not only its earthly chief, but he would represent them before the Most High. His life would be priestly; he would bear the whole clan upon his heart and remember them daily in the presence of their Holy One. Job was the chief of just such a family.

How precious these clans were to God is evident from the rhapsody of David in Psalm cxxxiii. Calling attention to the far-reaching influence of a godly household, he said that it was as fragrant to God and to man as was the priceless perfume poured upon Aaron's head on the great consecration day.

And yet—this is how the thought goes on—it might be that into this happy, peaceful family, death would enter, taking away its chief and leaving a heart-broken woman

with empty arms. It is difficult for our modern Western minds to realize the position of that childless widow. The ordinary household of that time would have made her into a drudge. She would have become a pitiful outcast. It was suggested to *God's* clan, that she should continue to be its queen, and with new honours.

Here I am certain we get another searchlight, and this time it is turned upon the heart of God. He knew, as no other could; He cared, as no other would, for that lonely desperate soul. And He set in order a plan by which she should be comforted. Of course, this plan was not acceptable to every clan. None of God's plans are. His wish concerning a pause for rest and worship one day in every seven is still very lightly set aside; there are many who say they can see no point in His earnest restrictions regarding the moral law.

And it was only the *ideal* household who would have any consideration for the tender-hearted plan which God made known to Moses.

Yet out of this beneficent and God-like

principle the Sadducees of our Lord's day evolved their miserable caricature.

Their story and its application was crude enough to be ludicrous. They had no "vision." Their notions concerning the resurrection were pitiful in the extreme.

To thrust the thought of "properties" into their dreams of that tremendous event was closely allied to the case of the old countryman who went to London to see all that he could of the Coronation. He returned in very high feather. In an eating-house in Soho, he had had the best pig's trotters he ever tasted. Such gratification was not sinful, but it was highly irrelevant to the inner meaning of the Coronation.

And a suggestion, just as foolish, just as paltry, was in the question: "The woman then—at the resurrection—whose property shall she be?"

How was He to answer them? How could He tell them of Heavenly things, when they had not even grasped what they might have grasped of earthly things?

"The men of this age," He said, "marry

and the women are given in marriage" (as a business arrangement), "but as for those who shall have been deemed worthy to find a place in that other age and in the resurrection from among the dead, *the men do not marry and the women are not given in marriage.*"

This statement implies that the purely commercial instinct will be unknown. Getting for oneself and keeping will be a notion that is untenable in that other world.

"For indeed," He added, "they cannot die again!" That is, they cannot possibly return to a condition of thought so deathly. This gives us another glimpse of the utter blessedness of that future state, since all the sin and misery of this poor world has for its seed that idea of getting and keeping—and yonder it will be unknown.

"They are like angels, and are sons of God through being sons of the resurrection."

We cannot yet understand all that this means, but it comprehends far more than even the hungriest heart can hope for.

Because, the resurrection will mean an

investiture, an entering upon new and hitherto unconceived honours. Our powers will not be diminished, but increased. We shall not be less capable of loving, we shall be able to make a better job of it!

I feel no doubt whatever that ultimately all longing will be satisfied, because of that One who cared for us long before we ever cared for Him, and who emptied out the treasure of His Being, so that we might be no more beggars, but landed proprietors with a stake in His universe.

"They will never again be hungry or thirsty . . . for the Lamb who is in front of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to watersprings of life."

I take this to mean that the One we call Jesus will introduce us to the very essence of love. Our best expression of it now is love for a lover, and we fear lest that dear raindrop shall be lost in the Eternal Ocean.

No, no, my dear child, but only enriched, and empowered, and wooed to its unique place in the great scheme of a Lover who was, and who is, and who is to come. Who

very simply and trustfully looked up to God and said:

"And all mine are Thine. And Thine are mine. And I am coming to a crowning day, because of *them*!"

Tarrying

TARRYING means—to stay ; to remain behind ; to wait ; to put off coming or going ; to delay ; to linger.

To our human ways of rush and hurry there is something very distasteful about tarrying. We like to be up and doing, we like to be moving towards the goal.

And tarrying is so unsatisfactory. The would-be adventurer would far rather become a settler than a tarrier. For tarrying is neither one thing nor the other. It is not moving on ; but then neither does it mean settling down. It means being ready to go, or ready to stay. It is like having one's luggage packed and down in the hall all day, knowing all the while it may have to be carried up and unpacked again before one can go to bed at night.

And it is so hard for us to understand that there is any "use" in tarrying. Downright hard work we can comprehend. Keeping on from morning till night is quite a simple matter to take in, because, for many of us, that is the only way we know of getting things done. And it is pleasant to go to bed at night with a fine list of achievements behind one. Washing done; jam made; beans set; potatoes hoed.

As the village blacksmith went up the stairs thinking how—

> "Something attempted, something done,
> Had earned a night's repose,"

he was a happy fellow. We can enter fully into his delightful feelings.

There are many of such promising pupils in God's school. Men and women who do not spare themselves, who are quick to buy up the opportunities which come their way, and who have resolutely dedicated all the time there is to the service of one peerless Master.

But in the school there is a higher class still, and this is for the tarriers.

It must be a higher class, because to tarry quietly, patiently, and worthily, only for one day, is something that has to be climbed after, something that must be striven for.

But when, as sometimes happens, the tarrying goes on for weeks, months, even years, we begin—short-sighted as we are—to realize that there must be something in it. The lesson takes so long to learn, it would appear that in God's sight "tarrying" is a priceless achievement.

It seems to us so much more satisfactory to be feeding lambs and sheep; seeking out the wanderers; bringing again that which was driven away; that it is very difficult for us to understand why any faithful shepherd should be asked to leave his work absolutely alone, and to become a tarrier. It is a mystery, and human nature kicks against it.

"*I never was a loafer.*"

This is what an energetic shepherd said when his physician urged complete rest. And that is how tarrying looks to most of us. Perhaps at the back of our minds we are a little bit afraid that those who do not understand will think that we are loafing.

And yet what great things have been accomplished by some of those who were accounted idlers.

Richard Jefferies used to lie for hours in the long grass of the fields, not writing nor even making pencilled notes, but just looking and listening, and sometimes only feeling.

He would spend half a day, sometimes, climbing slowly up a grassy hill to drink water from a special spring. He would stand for a long, long time on a wooden bridge watching trout in the shallow water.

People thought that he was idling his time away—and if coin of the realm is the thing above all others to be most valued and most striven for, then he certainly was a failure; for he lived and died in poverty.

But how many of us have been glad that Jefferies lived and did his tarrying! Glad that he saw so lovingly, and described so accurately the Pageant of an English Summer. For his writing is no mere catalogue of objects, rather it is a chronicle of important events happening in dearly loved surroundings. I have never seen his par-

ticular field of cowslips, nor glimpsed his humble bee, but I know my own cowslips and wild bees more intimately that I ever should have done if he had not known his.

No, tarrying is not idleness. The silence of winter is only a preparation for the joyous humming of a summer day. The rest-cure is only a process for bringing about greater fruitfulness.

I wonder why it is, then, that we think so much of effort. Why should I fret because I cannot always write long letters to friends who expect them? Cannot visit every one who is in trouble; nor do even half the things that earnest people suggest to me.

For I know that really and truly the good a human being may accomplish is not limited by the things she is able to do. I know that when the body is incapacitated, it is quite possible for the spirit to travel far.

One of the days that I spend utterly alone and in bed may more truly help the mourners with whom I long to sympathize, and the friends who are in perplexity, than any words or gifts of mine could do.

Because, as I tarry in the silence, I am

thinking thoughts of them towards the only Being who can help them. And those thoughts may be the aerial that shall enable them to catch the comforting message.

I think, if we only knew enough, or were sufficiently in tune with the Infinite One, we should be able to trace many a rainbowed tear and many a wish for reformation to the silent thought-prayer of some tarrier.

And now I am thinking of those tarriers who expect to be in the same class until the long term ends and the holidays begin.

There are many whose bodies will never be any better until they put on immortality. They go on from day to day in weakness, often in pain ; not very much worse, perhaps, than they were a year ago, and yet with no prospect of being definitely better.

Oh, these poor tarriers ! Theirs is not always the devastating agony which commands respect and continuous anxiety. Those who live with them have perhaps got used to them. Dying, we all know, is likely to be spectacular, but merely tarrying is apt to become monotonous.

When I was a girl of eighteen I used to go

and see a very poor old woman. She had a bed-sitting room in another woman's house, and the latter was paid a small weekly sum to lodge and "do" for her.

I found those visits extremely depressing, for old Mrs. Day, very clean, her hair neatly parted, and brushed over her ears, sat on a hard windsor chair looking the picture of misery. I can seem to see her now, her hands hanging down at her sides, her white face with its high cheek-bones; and her hopelessly dejected eyes gazing wearily at the floor.

Every morning she left her spotless bed and sat on the hard chair. Every night she rose from the chair and went back to bed. And these two facts meant a great deal of painful effort for Mrs. Day, and considerable help from her landlady.

I used to go in from the bright sunshine outside, and the ecstatic hope of eighteen, to this clean but cheerless room and to the hopelessness of helpless age.

I used to try to talk; to tell cheerful news of village affairs which I thought would interest her, but to every remark of

mine she only dropped her poor white eyelids still further and shook her head even more sadly, saying: "I'm no good to nobody; ask the Lord to take me home."

And so I used to kneel by her side and try to frame words to this effect, with the poor tarrier adding her hopeless superlatives to the petition. "If it be Thy will, take her home, Lord."

"*Do, Lord. Oh, do! and let it be soon.*"

Sometimes she showed me her long twisted hands, so painfully white, with the bones showing through the skin, and she told me of the washing they had done, great baths full of it, great floors piled with it. Some women would not have tackled it, but she loved washing. Now she was no good to nobody, and she couldn't think why the Lord let her stay on.

It is a long time now since that worn-out fetter—her poor body—was broken and thrown away, and I think that she now knows the reason of those long monotonous years which came at the end of such an active life.

Why she, who had worked so hard for

others, had finally to be supported by her friends. Why she, who had washed the hard difficult articles, such as coarse bedding and men's overalls, could not at last wash her own face.

I do not know why, but I think that it must have been that she was training for some undreamed-of Afterward. For, look at things how we will, there are afflictions of mind, body, and estate which seem to have no earthly significance. Therefore is it not certain that they must have a tremendous bearing upon the heavenly future?

I am so fond of that story by Hans Andersen called "The Silver Shilling." You will remember how every one who handled that shilling tried to get rid of it. Bandied about, passed secretly at night, and abused in the daytime it was always unwelcome, always pronounced "bad."

Until one day a traveller carried it away over the sea to another country—the country where it had been minted. Now a great change took place in the fortunes of the shilling. It was no longer unwelcome, for this was the land where its true value was

known and appreciated. It was current coin of the realm.

I think the experience called "tarrying" has to do with a realm of which we apprehend very little. I mean the realm of God.

The Seed Catalogue

BEFORE the first snowdrop held up its first green spear, before the winter aconite showed one glimmering stem, the seed catalogue arrived.

It was a day of icy wind. The grass in the lawn crackled as one walked on it. The ground was so hard that the jobbing gardener sighed, and had to put in his day sawing the old apple tree into logs. He said that such days made him restless, for there was so much that needed doing, only it was no good doing it till the frosts let go. And when they did, he wouldn't know which thing to do first, and all his employers would be sure to want him for two days a week instead of one—in which case he would want a few weeks of twelve days each. He lamented that in the first days of early spring

he nearly always offended somebody because he couldn't possibly manufacture days; whereas now—folks looked at him when he arrived and said: "Ah-hem—well! There's not much you can do. Better put in half a day."

I showed him the seed catalogue, and his eyes brightened.

"It's early, isn't it?" said I.

"Not a minute too early," said he. "When I got the prize for my allotment——" I had heard it all many times before, but I settled down to hear it all again. Our jobbing gardener loves to describe the rows of firm "heart-y" cabbages, the crisp lettuces, the monster carrots, turnips, beet-roots and onions; how the allotment was edged with parsley and with little diamond-shaped corners of radishes and mustard and cress. The taller vegetables graduated towards the centre, and the adjudicator had exclaimed at the accuracy of the rows and at the careful calculation of the prize-winner.

"You see," the jobbing gardener always remarks in telling the story, "I could see it

all in my 'ead before ever I put a seed into the ground."

"Yes," said I, "I agree. It is always wise to make a plan and work towards it, and I want a border like *that*."

I showed him the picture which was on the cover of the new catalogue. It portrayed a gravel path, flanked on either side by delphiniums, foxgloves, sunflowers, stocks, giant pansies and forget-me-nots. They stood in serried ranks.

The jobbing gardener handed the catalogue back to me and went on with his sawing, after remarking regretfully, "I wish you had Missenly's soil."

Miss Henley is a lady who has been fortunate enough to secure the jobbing gardener's services on Mondays. He comes to us on Tuesdays, and he is always full—metaphorically—of her splendid soil. It must be beautiful stuff. If ever I suggest that we shall try to get an early crop of peas, or a special kind of pansy, the jobbing gardener says it would be a play-game if only we had Missenly's soil, for that will produce anything and everything. She al-

ways has abundance of winter greens when the rest of us are existing on root vegetables. She gets strawberries earlier than any one else, and their size is prodigious. We once had a goodly crop of black currants, and I spoke proudly of them, till I heard that their output was feeble compared with those belonging to Missenly. Our choicest antirrhinums and our best geraniums are but wilding blossoms when placed "alongside of her'n." It is very disheartening—or would be, if to rival Missenly was all one had a garden for.

It is not. So I went indoors, spread out the seed catalogue, and considered.

I turned over the pages one by one thinking of the glory of the garden. The very names of flowers, just their printed names, seem to have an influence and a soothing power. Musk, mignonette, pansies, roses, lilies; they came obediently until the room seemed full of them.

When Bunty came in from school I was still busy with the catalogue, and she came to help me.

"There is a garden in her face,
Where roses and white lilies blow . . ."

The lines sprang into my mind as I looked into her bright eyes and saw the tiny pink tinge coming into cheeks which are often too pale to please me.

O little garden (I thought), the time of roses and lilies is not just yet, but it won't be long. For nearly twelve years I have been preparing the soil for them, and it was none too soon. The catalogue must be considered long before any seed is sown.

"How long will it take to master the violin?" asked a would-be musician.

"A lifetime and a half," was the reply.

And one's first conclusion is that the mastery is a thing impossible. But I think the thought hidden in that whimsical statement is that half, at least, of the mother's life goes to the making of the child's.

Take only one of our great writers—Sir J. M. Barrie. Writing of his mother, he tells us that her very childhood seems so much a part of him that when he looks back and tries to mirror his own, it is not a little boy that he sees, but "a little *girl*, wearing a wide bonnet with magenta strings!"

And then as we looked together, Bunty

and I, at the well-planned order list that the merchants had kindly sent us, my thoughts went to the seed shops. Those little shops scattered up and down the land. We all know them. Shops where our Missenlys may get the beginnings of the choicest flowers, and where stalwart land men and small holders come to consult with the alert shopmen concerning how much mangold-wurzel seed they would require for so many lugs of land.

What romance is hidden in those seeds that have not yet begun adventuring! They have not yet had any chance to correspond with their environment. The power to live is in them, but as long as they lie in sacks, on trays, or in sealed packets, they cannot be said to have experienced life as they could experience it. They have not yet expressed their Creator's thought concerning them.

William Carey mended shoes; Hudson Taylor toiled as a poor medical student, living on brown bread and apples; Mary Slessor slaved as a mill hand, and Charles Dickens worked in a blacking factory.

How many men to-day whose ambitions lie among the stars are weighing out tea and slicing bacon? And how many women who dreamed dreams of authorship, or travel, or of music, are spending their lives working in a hot kitchen, pushing a perambulator, and wrestling with the serious problem of making both ends meet?

And yet it is in the seed shop that we find carefully selected seed. Any day, some countryman who has his furrows carefully prepared, may come in for the measure of goodly seed that shall transform his red earth into a field of waving wheat. Any day some wise garden lover may demand the seeds that are going to make a miniature Eden for him. There is no object in saving seed except that it may some day come in contact with the soil.

Surely the wise Gardener knows the very time and place that is best for the sowing. I have often sown my seeds too early, and have suffered loss.

The seed catalogue is valuable, because it is not only an evidence of what has been done, but it indicates what yet may be done.

How I love looking at those pictures! The beautiful wide borders of massed annuals, the vivid spires of lupin and larkspur, and the forests of tall hollyhocks.

But what I love better still, is to see in imagination those same friendly folk filling the waste places of my garden.

The seed catalogue brings me new hope. Those brown, unlovely corners shall yet blossom as the rose!

For we had several bare patches last summer and autumn. This time I am going to fill them with foxgloves, phlox, yellow sunflowers, and Michaelmas daisies—all easy things to grow, and not too particular about situation.

And the moment I decided to put nicotine and mignonette in the triangular scrap near the summer-house, I could feel myself walking up the winding path in an August twilight full of fragrance.

That dream was very pleasant, but you and I both know that a long and patient process will have to be gone through first.

Even a gardener's life is not all honey! He cannot stand for ever watching the seed

coming up and noting the change of colour and the rapid development of root and leaf. No, there are some days when he seems to do nothing for the garden but just keep things from getting any worse. Sometimes one does not even do that. In spite of the utmost vigilance one cannot keep watch upon every snail.

I went to bed one night last summer full of proud thoughts about my tallest delphinium. It was just showing a hint of sapphire, and my heart was lifted up. Next morning its kingly head was bowed almost to the ground, and half-way up its tubular stem was a gaping wound as big as a shilling. I sought the jobbing gardener. He plugged the wound with moss and bound it up as tenderly as any woman could touch a child. He tied the delphinium to a stake, and the brave poor thing blossomed after all—only its centre spire was mauve, though the flowers that came below the wound were the original sapphire.

There is the seed which shows no signs of coming up, as well as the seed which springs up, flourishes, and then languishes

after all. In either case, what heart-searchings the sower experiences!

Did I sow it right? Did I put it in too deeply, or was the soil not ready? Has some bird caught it away?

"My dear lad seems not to care for religion," says some anxious mother. "He has left off going to a place of worship. I don't think he reads his Bible. I doubt whether he ever prays."

"My daughter has come home from college with strange notions about Christianity. She says that all she ever felt in the past about Christ was merely emotion. Psychology, she argues, can account for all that we once called 'experience.'"

And the poor mother is bewildered. She sowed the Seed, patiently, lovingly, and apparently it came up.

The earnest lad, the blithe whole-hearted girl, confessed their faith, and now it all seems to have come to nothing. Or, rather, to worse than nothing. For surely it would have been better never to have made any "profession" than, having made it, to go back upon it.

But now let me tell you about my passion-flower. I did not grow it from seed. I got it, a tiny plant in a little pot, from a man who keeps a small nursery in this district. Often when I am tired or perplexed, or in difficulty over my plans for the garden, I go in to see this nurseryman. He lets me "potter" in and out of his hot and cold houses. He gives me hints and he discourses about the habits of plants. He never smiles at my ignorance.

His face is the sort of face you might imagine a man would get who has been long years in the company of growing things. He knows how much nature can accomplish without ever being in a hurry.

We planted the passion-flower in our garden with a larch pole beside it ready for it to climb up, and in my mind's eye I saw it mingling with the yellow gipsy roses which have overrun the pear tree, and fraternizing with the crimson rambler on its other side.

But the poor thing languished. Its leaves withered and dropped off; the jobbing gardener pronounced it dead, and he planted a clematis to run up the larch pole instead.

I learned that Missenly has a beautiful passion-flower all a-spreading like anything.

I always find that my nurseryman is sympathetic, and one day when he brought me a little white moss rose, I told him about the passion-flower. Together we visited the spot, he dug with his finger around the surface of the old root, and he smiled. And lo, the little thing was not dead after all! There was a real and unmistakable green "shoot" issuing from the dark stem. It was living! That was all I wanted to know.

It has not yet run up the larch pole and held converse with the roses, but it lives, and I can wait for the rest.

Will you let me take that very simple circumstance and apply it to your fears concerning the careless lad and the superior daughter?

Your anxious rebukes may, and probably will, impress them. These headstrong young folk are really affectionate and they hate to vex and upset you, and so your tears of dismay will possibly make them hide their real selves from you. But that is not what you want.

You feel, however, that you must do something about it; that you cannot let them just drift away from the old faith without a protest.

And in reply to that, may I remind you that it was nothing which we did that maintained the life in our passion-flower and induced it eventually to give evidence that it was alive.

Forces right outside of us and of all our skill had taken the matter up. The ministry of certain elements in the soil, the healing properties of the sun, rain, wind and dew, had all been at the service of that ailing root, and it had taken into itself of any or all of them as much as it would. Human hands had no part nor lot in the process.

And let me remind you also that it was no unnatural nor unreasonable thing that took place. It is much more reasonable that they should live than that they should die.

And when we desire that our darlings shall become possessors of the eternal life, we are not running after some scarcely attainable project nor demanding some abnormal

experience for them. Human beings were made for God, and God exists to satisfy their needs. And—I say it with reverent awe—I think that should there be any missing of the way "both would losers be."

Anxious heart, believe me, I am not advocating a policy of stoical nor of easy indifference towards your wandering one; I am only pointing out to you that the seed and the tender plant may well be left to Him with whom we have to do. He has avenues unknown to us, gentle processes by which he woos and strengthens the weakly life. I am not forgetting that man has a free will. But over against that I set the fact that God has sent here as His Viceregent a Spirit who woos, pleads, strives with, and illumines that free will. Our part is to join our desires with His.

I am a great believer in the power of memory. It would be interesting if we could take a census, not of the number of our population, but of what word or achievement we should like best to be remembered by.

But memory is a whimsical thing, and I

have an idea that Bunty may forget my weighty words on tidiness and cleanliness, but she will always remember that whenever possible I kept violets on my writing-table.

And many a flower name finds its place in a seed catalogue simply because of its hold on the public memory.

I have lad's-love and sweet-briar and balm in my borders, because these things grew in my grandmother's Gloucestershire garden. And I shall always make a speciality of auriculas, because I have a dim memory of being held up to a rockery to smell a big purple blossom, and of discovering that it reminded me of a field of cowslips.

I shall always sow pansy seed because my mother loves pansies; and I cherish a little clump of pink hepatica because my father loved it. The scent of madonna lilies after dark wakens something in me that is too subtle to be set on paper. And I know that this is because John's first gift to me was a large cluster of madonna lilies.

I have a romantic affection for Mrs. Sinkins pinks, for did not the scent of these fill my Scottish honeymoon with fragrance?

Morning after morning I woke to hear the waves of the loch lapping on the shore, and to inhale the spicy odours of pinks straying through the open windows.

My list was—for the time being—complete, and as Bunty went out to post it, my thoughts turned again to the little garden of her soul. It is a solemn but delightful thought, that we are each of us, and all the time sowing memories.

The things which to me are truly lovely and of good report will be lovely and of good report to Bunty. She is already planting auriculas.

"How beautiful God is!" exclaimed Charles Kingsley in his last hour of earthly life. And that is the memory I want most of all to sow.

The Hard-of-Hearings

THEY are a large family, and sometimes I think they are increasing. Branches of the family have settled in every town; they have sittings in every church, and many of us know them very intimately indeed.

Speaking in generalities, we are, most of us, very sorry for them. These Hard-of-Hearings are an afflicted family. They are cut off from much that makes life sweet. As I said, we are sorry for them. But mingled with our sympathy there is a good deal of pity for ourselves, that we should have to be perplexed and bothered by their defect.

And, speaking quite frankly, I don't think they have always been treated quite as kindly nor as patiently as they ought to have been.

We are all so nervy nowadays. Our tempers are so easily ruffled; and somehow or other it is a most irritating experience to have to repeat simple statements many times before Mr. Hard-of-Hearing can get hold of them. And so we are inclined to avoid him, to pass him quickly in the street, to give him a hasty nod at the church door, and not to sit by him at the tea-meeting because it wears us out to talk to him.

Then there is Mrs. Hard-of-Hearing, and she is usually so garrulous, and her voice is so loud, that if we meet her in a shop every one in that street becomes aware that she is entertaining the minister over the week-end and that she is going to give him roast lamb for his dinner and veal pie for his supper.

Intimate details of your husband's last bronchial attack become common property, though you have difficulty in persuading Mrs. Hard-of-Hearing that it was only bronchitis. She had heard it was peritonitis, and is still inclined to believe it.

Now the blind man cannot see at all, and no one is annoyed nor irritated by this affliction. But the deaf man very often

half-hears, and the result is an amazing discord of misunderstanding, sometimes amusing, and sometimes gravely serious.

John once stayed with a deaf farmer who waxed into fury because a neighbour sent to ask permission to put a plough in his field.

"Put a sow in my field," exclaimed the irate owner. "No, indeed! I'm surprised he should ask. Where are my boots?"

John pointed out the mistake. His host cooled down, heartily giving the required permission. But at intervals, all that day, he explained to John the immense amount of damage a sow could do to a field, giving instances from his experience, and reiterating his opinion of the unreasonable character of such a request.

To see, to handle, to taste, to smell—all these faculties help us to apprehend the things which pertain to our ordinary human life.

But more than we think, far more than we can ever dream, we apprehend through our ears. And this is why the Hard-of-Hearings are so often accounted stupid.

Their affliction has deprived them, not merely of the bare sound, but of the quick perception which is part and parcel of the auditory nerve.

And oh, it is a real calamity this thing called deafness. It is only because we do not really understand them, that we are ever impatient with these poor Hard-of-Hearings. Because they do not, as a rule, suffer physical pain, because they exhibit no withered limb, nor grievous wound, we are apt to pass by their affliction as one of the minor ills.

Yet I feel we ought to take the trouble to get into that silent house where the Hard-of-Hearings live. It will involve some trouble. They have got so used to having no callers, or to visitors who do not care to come beyond the doorstep that they do not now very readily answer the door.

We may have to knock a good many times; and how impatient we feel with those who keep us standing on the threshold! We feel inclined to go round to the wash-house; to walk in front of the sitting-room windows; anything, to make the

inmates realize that we—*we* are still standing outside.

But they — the Hard-of-Hearings — are sensitive folk, and they do not like to be startled, so we must patiently knock until they let us in, and then after that we must just sit still with them.

It will need some grace to do that ; to be the sole audience and the sole entertainer entails some strain. But it is so well worth doing. I do not think any member of the Hard-of-Hearing family can readily unburden himself to more than one at a time. The difficulty of catching the different voices ; the terrible discord in the poor ears when several speak together, all militate against any intimate conversation.

Then there is another handicap. The deaf person nearly always has "noises" in his head. And so the sounds from without have to get through these before any Hard-of-Hearing can understand the simple words we say.

There was Thomas Hardy's deaf man who could have heard well enough if only folks would stop frying fish in his head. Some days they did not fry so much and then the

poor fellow could hear better. But all too soon they were at it again!

I knew a man who had a continual roaring in one ear. Sometimes it was like the shunting of an engine, sometimes like the chuff-chuff of a chaff-cutter, and occasionally it was like the opening and shutting of a mighty bellows.

Now I notice that persons who are "listening-in" are terribly irritated if some sudden noise occurs in the room where they are sitting. But fancy having to contend continually with noises when you are listening desperately all the time; and fancy being considered stupid because you failed to hear!

Instead of that, the Hard-of-Hearings ought to be applauded whenever they do hear. They ought to be thanked for their continual courtesy in trying to hear. More than once in a railway-carriage I have said to John: "Don't talk to me, please. I can't hear properly, and the strain of listening and trying to follow your remarks wears me to bits."

I wonder sometimes whether we, any of

us, have anything to say that is worth the energy Mr. Hard-of-Hearing is obliged to expend if he would hear it.

I expect that depends on how we set about it.

I once heard the sweetest woman I know talking to a deaf man, and I was amazed at the skill with which she drew him out. He was a sensitive, deprecatory elderly man, who eschewed strangers. But my friend was at home with him directly. In two minutes she had discovered the subject that had always interested him more than anything else. It was agriculture. He told her about his fields and his stock. I had seldom seen him so animated as when she said: "Oh, do tell me how to milk a cow. I have always wanted to know."

Mr. Hard-of-Hearing forgot his deafness and consequently was able to hear much better than usual, as he entered into a detailed exposition of how to milk a cow, with my friend's intelligent eyes following his statements closely and her kind voice assuring him that he made everything so beautifully clear.

Then there was the case of Mrs. Witts. She was over eighty, and she said to Bunty, in a loud, deep voice: "I am another grandma," so Bunty called her "Nunner-grandma."

She was woefully deaf, this poor old lady, but I found that by sitting close to her and speaking into her ear in a low clear voice she could very often hear me. Her delight was really touching. Many people shouted at her and finally gave up the task with a shrug of the shoulders. But, wonderful to relate, she could hear me read; and so, many a time I read simple stories to her and also listened to the things she was so kind in telling me. She said I reminded her of a certain Miss Spring, who had visited her years before when she lived in Cornwall.

"Oh, I did dearly love her," said "Nunner-grandma," fervently, "and she was just like you"; adding in the same breath, "She was a most queer-looking person, with a peculiar eye."

Not long after this, when the old lady was more feeble and had to lie in bed, she told me that I was just like her mother. Often

she called me "Mother," and always when I arrived she welcomed me with: "Here comes my *dear* mother!" Her daughter—who was sixty—never failed to expostulate with her, but the old lady would not be put down and she liked to lie there holding my hand and telling me tales of her childhood, her early girlhood, and of the days when she was a young wife with her first baby. Her mother had died when she was eight, and naturally all the child's memories would centre round a woman who was on the sunny side of thirty.

After her mother's death, the little eight-year-old had to go out to work. She was put "to service." She told me she could remember standing up to the wash-tub on a stool because she was too short to reach it otherwise. She had to mind children and to scrub floors for eighteenpence a week and her food. Poor little eight-year-old girl! I can imagine how her thoughts went back to that young mother who had doubtless stood between her and the world. And now, in her old age, the little bit of kindness I had been so glad to show her seemed to her like

the loving ministry of a dear mother. The deafness which had been such a barrier was no barrier between us.

Many a time we talked of that land where the deaf hear. With a wistful eagerness her thoughts turned towards the Lord of that land. With humble patience, she spelled out and slowly read to herself little books of Bible stories that were Bunty's.

My daughter aged three and my daughter of eighty-five were fast friends. And the first time that Bunty heard of death was when " Nunner-grandma " went Home.

Now I learnt several things about the Hard-of-Hearings from my contact with Mrs. Witts. One was that you cannot reach deaf persons by speaking to them from a distance. You are obliged to go near, to give all of yourself to the task, and not once, but many times.

Then I thought of the spiritually deaf, and I began to wonder whether the same truths would apply there. So very often they do. Often the spiritual difficulties are made clear by consideration of the natural.

We are so frequently deploring that the

world turns a "deaf ear" to the great truths of Sin and of Salvation, that our young people are not interested, and that even Christians are not eager to apprehend any more of them than will just bring about personal safety and a passport into Heaven.

We have felt hurt and even angry with them for being like it. I once heard a godly man say impatiently to his son: "Well, you know the Truth; you have been brought up on it, and if you don't believe it, it is simply because you *won't*, and you ought to be ashamed of it."

The son was exceedingly hurt. He replied that if the Truth could not make his father free from showing temper, it was not the right Truth for *him*, and he would have none of it.

No, it is not by being shocked and angry that we can hope to reach deaf ears.

"Thou shalt not curse the deaf" was one of the humane laws which God made for His chosen race; and deafness is in itself enough of a calamity, without the displeasure of the more favoured.

For, think how much the deaf man misses

of loving intimacy with his fellow-creatures. Every deep emotion, hope, joy, tenderness itself, is conveyed to another, not so surely by the expression of the face or the touch of fingers, as by vibration of the voice. The deaf man never hears whispers, nor soft cheep of waking birds, nor streams running in the night ; he cannot catch the inflexions in the voice even of his best beloved.

And how infinitely more sorrowful is the case of the man who is deaf to the deeper call of the Spirit. He knows nothing of the holy ecstasy which comes to the soul who having heard the Divine Voice, says: "Speak, Lord." Nothing of the wonder and delight of the listening. To ask the unspiritual man his opinion of heavenly matters is like setting a deaf man to judge music. Such a man might sit during the Hallelujah Chorus and never realize his mistake.

That he does not hear, that he remains unmoved, is a matter not for our annoyance but for our supreme commiseration. Let us remember that the Saviour shed tears over deaf Jerusalem.

But because the deaf man is so very often inarticulate as well, we have got into the way of thinking that he doesn't care. Believe me, he *does* care. With what wistful envy he thinks of the man to whom the Bible is no dreary treatise, but a letter from his next of kin ; to whom the Eternal is not a Judge with a bias against him, but that tremendous Lover who fills the recesses of his soul as the incoming tide floods the waiting shore.

The spiritually deaf man knows there is that within him which never will be satisfied until he does hear ; but we shall need great patience, great persistence, and greater tenderness, if we are ever to help him to begin the listening life.

Silver Trumpets

THERE is a legend which declares that the prince of darkness having forfeited his place in the kingdom of light, proceeded to found a kingdom of his own. But when all was done, he was sad, and one of his servants ventured to ask him what memory of the old life in heaven he missed most.

Lucifer paused a moment, then he said, "The sound of the silver trumpets in the morning."

It would seem that those trumpets called the joyous family each day to fresh achievement. The silver notes were not only a call, but a new inspiration for all that the new day might bring.

This legend is beautiful enough to be true. That rebel son could have no place in the

family circle—he had, through pride, renounced the joys of obedience and had made himself an outlaw. For him, the silver trumpets brought no eager zest to serve; and yet he missed the gladness of the old-time summons.

It is a sad thing to be an outlaw. The word "wicked" in Scripture means, not desperate and loathsome offences, but simply "lawless." In other words, the "wicked man" of the Psalms is one who recognizes no law, no obligation, no leading except his own desires. Sometimes in my own heart I have found that "wicked" man.

And the exaltation of any will which runs contrary to the will of God, must bring disaster. It is a solemn thought that, in such a manner, sin entered the universe, and that for this very thing, Lucifer, son of the morning, fell like a lightning flash from his high estate.

These are dark mysteries, but Isaiah gives us hints concerning them, and Ezekiel tells us in startling language of the dignity and beauty of one, who from being an ally became an adversary of the unutterable love.

Only the barest outline of his history has been revealed to us. We understand that his long warfare against the work of God for man, began in Eden.

As a result, man's sight, hearing, and every other sense for apprehending his Maker became dull and almost extinct.

Civilization advanced, but when man's thoughts concerning God reached their topmost peak, He pronounced sorrowfully against them, calling those carefully builded theories—*Confusion.*

And yet, piercing through, and outdistancing, the blare of the usurper, a silver trumpet called to one single soul in a heathen city.

"Abram! Abram!" and the owner of that name replied, "Here am I!"

Judged by our human standards, God's methods are very slow. Abram came out from splendid Ur, to journey to a better city, but the journey lasted long, and he was still living the tent-life when he died.

Isaac blazed the trail a little further, and Jacob carried it on. Then suddenly it ended in a cul-de-sac.

For four hundred years the family, through whom God had promised to visit and bless humanity, was in bondage, enslaved by the foremost nation on the earth.

They came out from that bondage, and Abram's trail blazed again. The world saw only a disorderly rabble of runaway slaves attempting to cross the wilderness. To us, that long solemn march of theirs is representative of the long, long trek of humanity in its quest after an eternal home.

That journey, and the high hope which stimulated them to make it, was intended to leave its impress upon mankind.

God, the high and holy, who once had walked with man in Eden, had now to devise ways and means of getting through to the consciousness of His lost child.

Slow indeed was the process, and an illustration may help us to grasp its purport.

A large-souled physician once made an endeavour to get through to the feeble brain of a half-witted boy. The child was treated with the utmost kindness, was continually in the company of gentle and refined persons. He was surrounded by beauty, music, and

rhythm, yet nothing seemed to penetrate the oyster-shell in which his spirit lived. Till one day by accident, the doctor's wife dropped her thimble, and the silver gleaming thing rolled across the floor.

The oyster-boy watched it roll, and into his eyes came just one gleam of interest.

That day marked an epoch. The doctor knew that there was hope.

The next day at the same hour the thimble dropped, and once more the heavy lidded eyes gleamed with intelligence, and the large head turned ever so slightly. The awakened faculties were encouraged step by step. Presently the doctor hired a shoemaker who, in the lad's presence, made a shoe and fitted it to his foot, while the kind teacher stood by and pointing to it, said slowly and impressively, several times:

"*Shoemaker makes a shoe.*"

A tailor came who cut and measured cloth for a coat and after making it stitch by stitch put it on the oyster-boy. The words, "*Tailor makes a coat*" were repeated till their meaning filtered through.

A day came when that boy and his friend stood watching the sun climb up the eastern sky. The wondering eyes asked, and the doctor laying his hand on the boy's shoulder pointed to the dazzling east, and said reverently: "*God made the sun.*"

Thus the long arrested soul of that lad awoke to God-consciousness.

Often, when I read the details concerning the tabernacle in the wilderness I am reminded of this oyster-boy. And I seem to see the Heavenly Mind planning to get certain great aspects of truth through to the consciousness of His dull pupil.

The repetition may seem to us tiresome, the meticulous care with which the smallest detail is described, may weary our easy-going minds, and yet behind all of it, the offerings, the altar, the laver, and the furniture of the mysteriously cloud-shadowed tent, one thought is repeated with emphasis that should be unmistakable—*sin needs a Saviour.*

The robes of the high priest, his breast-plate and his mitre, were meant to foreshadow the beauty and the grace of that

coming One. Again and again the holy things insisted—

" He will be as lowly as the acacia wood, but as lasting and as lovely as gold. He is as heavenly as Aaron's ephod all of blue, and always He carries every one of you on His shoulders and on His heart."

Every moment spent in His company is as alluring as a golden bell.

Every step where you can trace Him is as satisfying as a pomegranate.

That this Saviour was prepared to go to all lengths; to pour out His own self into the universe that sin and death might die . . . how could *this* truth be made to penetrate the consciousness of a nation, and through that nation " get across " to the whole wide world?

Only by very elementary methods could that sublime thing be suggested. The life-stream of a small unblemished creature ebbed away, and a fragment of the red blood which was to all intents and purposes its *life*, was sprinkled on the unclean. This is the fundamental thought at the back of all the offerings.

. . . . . .

And then it is as though the Heavenly Lover longed to go still further. Longed to make it perfectly clear to these timorous perplexed men and women, that He was not merely a law-giver, not just a dread task-master down on them for their shortcomings—the Voice spoke again, and this time there is an echo surely from days before the Fall:

"*Make thee two trumpets of silver . . . that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps.*"

When I get puzzled over these types and shadows I find it a great help to ask myself just exactly what the children of that day would have thought about them. I think they must have loved the sound of the silver trumpets partly because of the very tuneful notes, and also because they always meant "attention, please!" and one never knew what might be going to happen.

Every one would hear that clarion note and would assemble at the door of the tabernacle. It was the authentic call of God. It might mean packing up one's tent and journeying on to the unknown: it might

mean warfare; but always it meant orders that were sure and unmistakable.

The silver trumpets never let anyone down, and in obeying them, those old-time pilgrims experienced "blessedness."

"Blessed is the people," wrote Ethan the Ezrahite, "that know the joyful sound (of silver trumpets), they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. In Thy name shall they rejoice all the day."

I am afraid that a good many of us read verses like that rather wistfully at times. This attitude of mind ought to be true of us, but is it?

We are fussy and fretful and often fault-finding. We see the spot on the skirting board; and the tiny streak of dust at the edge of the fireplace makes us absurdly cross. Because surely Jane ought to hear the silver trumpets calling her to do her work thoroughly. To be personal, I find my ears are quite preternaturally quick to hear a silver trumpet calling John, and summoning Bunty. I catch long-distance notes meant surely for the gas-man, and the plumber, and the laundry folk, and the man who does

the garden. They are so clear to *me*, I can't imagine how it is *they* don't hear them and act differently!

But, I am afraid I have often been deaf or shall we say a little hard of hearing when the silver trumpets called *me* to journey onward and to wage war against any besetments.

And yet, it is hard to understand why one should ever wish to be deaf. Because life has a way of smoothing out so wonderfully when one is obedient and ready to fit in with whatever comes. One's very attitude towards the disagreeable prospect, changes according to the way one thinks about it.

The alarm clock, which for years woke John and me to the activities of a new day—I have shaken my fist at it many a time and would like to have thrown it out of the window.

And the difficulties with the house and the sweep and charlady, how I have detested them and wondered why people couldn't do what they promised and why I should have to step into the breach and always be re-arranging and re-planning the work.

I could not see that these things, whatever might be the second cause of them, were, when one took the long view, just silver trumpets calling for the brave soldier spirit, or for the courage of the traveller who starts out on a new adventure.

All this is true, and yet, the silver trumpets were not exclusively associated with fierce fighting and wearisome journeys. How we misjudge our God when we think so! But we do think so,—we think that He only calls when He wants some tiresome task performed, or when He means us to tackle an uphill road which we are going to detest, and would avoid if we dared!

And all the time set down in clear black printing are these words:

Also, in the day of your gladness
And in your solemn days
In the beginnings of your months
Ye shall blow with the Trumpets
Over your burnt-offerings
And over your peace-offerings:

from which I think we are to understand that every day of gladness which comes to us has its origin in the heart of God. And

we are "called" to enjoy it just as truly as we are called to face disappointments.

"And in your solemn days" means I believe those days when we are brought to a very vivid consciousness of the Unseen. "Solemn" is not, I think, always synonymous with intense and unsmiling gravity, but rather means the joyous *awe* of being in the royal Presence.

Though we must, everyone of us, in our life pilgrimage, come sometimes upon solemn days. Days when it seems as though we never can be happy again. When we feel so stirred in spirit we say as Hezekiah did:

"I shall go softly all my years"—I can never skip nor run any more, I shall always in my soul's journey be walking in a solemn procession.

Suffering, and separation, and death,—these things make us go softly, but they need not make us deaf.

"The beginning of your months" may stand for all new ventures; while, the burnt-offering and the peace-offering were both of them matters for the individual conscience,

not a question of atonement but of *voluntary* appreciation and thanksgiving.

And so to put the idea into very plain and simple English, I think we may take it something after this fashion:

When you are experiencing the pleasure of a perfect day; when you seem tuned to touch the Infinite; when you are adventuring upon unknown paths; in moments when you feel specially drawn towards the heavenly, or specially thankful for any mercy received; remember that such things are overtures from God's spirit to yours.

Some trumpets with horribly discordant voices may shout us down, reducing us to sullen silence, but trumpets of silver are at once so clear and so sweet, they incline us to be in listening mood.

It is *then* that we can hear; then that we understand.

After we have formed the habit of hearing, and the habit of obeying the summons of those silver trumpets, there is a further step.

The poor world is still very deaf. We are for ever meeting with frightened souls who ask us piteously for advice and for clear direction.

We meet with others who say they have no desire for any of the upliftments nor for the consolation of religion.

Many times in Holy Writ we find that words comforting and convincing were spoken by the Lord, *through* a prophet, as though the prophet were a trumpet and the message had been just breathed through him.

Now He, who in silver tones has called us, had this very end in view. We may never feel ourselves to be doing anything very much except next things, but He meant that the way we live our own quiet unimportant lives should constitute a "call," to those who cannot hear *Him*.

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